

## § 162.572

section, it must require the parties to submit to us:

(1) A copy of the executed amendment or other documentation of any Indian landowners' actual consent;

(2) Proof of mailing of the amendment to any Indian landowners who are deemed to have consented; and

(3) Any other pertinent information for review.

(d) Unless specifically authorized in the lease, a written power of attorney, or a court document, Indian landowners may not be deemed to have consented to, and an Indian landowner's designated representative may not negotiate or consent to, an amendment that would:

(1) Reduce the payment obligations to the Indian landowners;

(2) Increase or decrease the lease area;

(3) Terminate or change the term of the lease; or

(4) Modify dispute resolution procedures.

### § 162.572 What is the approval process for an amendment to a WSR lease?

(a) When we receive an amendment that meets the requirements of this subpart, we will notify the parties of the date we receive it. We have 30 days from receipt of the executed amendment, proof of required consents, and required documentation to approve or disapprove the amendment or inform the parties in writing that we need additional review time. Our determination whether to approve the amendment will be in writing and will state the basis for our approval or disapproval.

(b) Our letter informing the parties that we need additional review time must identify our initial concerns and invite the parties to respond within 15 days of the date of the letter. We have 30 days from sending the letter informing the parties that we need additional time to approve or disapprove the amendment.

(c) If we do not meet the deadline in paragraph (a) of this section, or paragraph (b) of this section if applicable, the amendment is deemed approved to the extent consistent with Federal law. Unless the lease provides otherwise, provisions of the amendment that are

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inconsistent with Federal law will be severed and unenforceable; all other provisions of the amendment will remain in force.

### § 162.573 How will BIA decide whether to approve an amendment to a WSR lease?

(a) We may disapprove a WSR lease amendment only if at least one of the following is true:

(1) The Indian landowners have not consented and their consent is required;

(2) The lessee's mortgagees or sureties have not consented;

(3) The lessee is in violation of the lease;

(4) The requirements of this subpart have not been met; or

(5) We find a compelling reason to withhold our approval in order to protect the best interests of the Indian landowners.

(b) We will defer, to the maximum extent possible, to the Indian landowners' determination that the amendment is in their best interest.

(c) We may not unreasonably withhold approval of an amendment.

## WSR LEASE ASSIGNMENTS

### § 162.574 May a lessee assign a WSR lease?

(a) A lessee may assign a WSR lease by meeting the consent requirements in § 162.575 and obtaining our approval of the assignment under §§ 162.576 and 162.577 or by meeting the conditions in paragraphs (b) or (c) of this section.

(b) Where provided in the lease, the lessee may assign the lease to the following without meeting consent requirements or obtaining BIA approval of the assignment, as long as the lessee notifies BIA of the assignment within 30 days after it is executed:

(1) Not more than three distinct legal entities specified in the lease; or

(2) The lessee's wholly owned subsidiaries.

(c) The lessee may assign the lease without our approval or meeting consent requirements if:

(1) The assignee is a leasehold mortgagee or its designee, acquiring the lease either through foreclosure or by conveyance;